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DAWN

US proposal for Gaza force sparks consultations

• Extendable two-year mandate proposed for International Stabilisation Force • Three-phase plan to involve stabilisation, reconstruction and political solution • Draft doesn't propose 'peacekeeping status' for global force

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: A US document, outlining the creation of an International Stabilisation Force (ISF) for Gaza, has triggered intensive informal consultations among UN Security Council members and Muslim states expected to contribute troops, marking the most significant international initiative for the Palestinian territory since Oct 2023, when Israel invaded the enclave.

On Monday, Washington circulated the document among several Council members, proposing a mandate of at least two years, until December 2027, along with the possibility of extensions.

Pakistan, a current UNSC member, is among the states involved in the discussions. Diplomatic sources stressed that the document is not yet a draft resolution as no formal proposal has been tabled.

UN diplomats described the initiative as "the most significant international effort yet to shape Gaza's post-war security landscape".

Senior diplomats from the eight-country Muslim bloc — Pakistan, Turkiye, Indonesia, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar — are holding separate consultations in Washington and New York to coordinate positions ahead of the resolution's likely submission.

According to diplomatic sources, the ISF would operate under a unified command in close coordination with Israel and Egypt, alongside a newly trained and vetted Palestinian police force.

Its primary task would be enforcing Gaza's demilitarisation — preventing the reconstruction of military infrastructure and permanently decommissioning weapons held by non-state armed groups.

The mission is envisioned in three phases: stabilisation, reconstruction and solution.

The first phase would involve enforcing the ceasefire, securing borders, protecting civilians and humanitarian corridors, and establishing operational frameworks for aid distribution and security coordination.

The second phase would include rebuilding essential infrastructure and restoring utilities, while enabling the safe return of displaced people.

The third phase aims at finding political solutions, involving reconstitution of local governance structures and coordination with the Palestinian Authority.

The ISF would also train Palestinian police, assist humanitarian agencies, and undertake "additional tasks as may be necessary in support of the [peace] plan".

Notably, the draft does not invoke Chapter VII of the UN Charter, meaning the ISF would not have the same legal status as other UN peacekeeping missions.

Securing humanitarian corridors is also expected to be a key priority for the ISF, as Gaza remains in a humanitarian crisis, with thousands displaced and critical infrastructure damaged.

Aid agencies have warned that without secure access, essential supplies cannot reach vulnerable populations.

The ISF will also need to balance enforcement tasks with local sensitivities, Israel's security concerns, and coordination among a diverse group of troop-contributing countries.

Israel has said it will not accept a UN "blue-helmet" force, with a precedent-setting UNIFIL-style mandate, in the area. Arab states, including Jordan and Egypt, have emphasised a preference for "peacekeeping" rather than "enforcement".

The US plans to formally submit the resolution in the coming days, with a Security Council vote possible shortly thereafter.

Deployment is targeted for early 2026, subject to adoption and troop-contribution commitments. Preparatory training, coordination with humanitarian agencies, and logistical arrangements would follow swiftly after approval.

Diplomatic observers in Washington acknowledge that participation could enhance Pakistan's international standing and support stabilisation in Gaza. But they also warn that critics may question involvement in an enforcement-oriented mission, highlighting risks to personnel and the importance of maintaining perceived neutrality.

Zardari warns India against weaponising water

Meets Guterres, reaffirms Pakistan's support for global body's role in promoting peace

Dawn Report

DOHA: Warning against the weaponisation of water, President Asif Ali Zardari said on Tuesday that India's violations of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) could not and would not be allowed to succeed.

New Delhi had unilaterally held the IWT in abeyance following an attack in occupied Kashmir, which it blamed on Islamabad without evidence, leading to a military escalation in May of this year.

Pakistan has already said that it would construe any attempt by India to suspend its water share an "act of war", noting the IWT had no provision for unilateral suspension.

Addressing the issue at the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha, Qatar, the president said: "We in Pakistan, on the one hand, face the brunt of the impact of climate change, which has caused devastation for our people in the form of large-scale floods … on the other hand, we face a new threat in the form of water weaponisation. Water, which all the world knows, is an equal right of any human being and humanity.

PRESIDENT Asif Ali Zardari shakes hands with United Nations Secretary General Ant nio Guterres in Doha.—APP

"We are being threatened from across the border with a new threat in the form of weaponisation of water, violation of the IWT. This poses a serious threat to 240 million Pakistanis. Such tactics cannot and will not succeed."

A supplemental award by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague in June held that India could not unilaterally hold the treaty in abeyance. India, in response, said it did not recognise the court or its decisions.

Meetings

The president also met UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the summit.

In his meeting with the UN chief, President Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's strong support for multilateralism and the central role of the UN in promoting peace, equity and shared prosperity.

He underscored the importance of resolving longstanding disputes, including Jammu and Kashmir, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, and called for the reversal of India's unilateral and illegal measures.

The president also reiterated Pakistan's principled position on Palestine, stressing the need to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. The president also raised the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, recalling that it remained one of the oldest unresolved items on the agenda of the UN Security Council.

President Zardari met his Iraqi counterpart Dr Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid and the two leaders reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening longstanding ties.

President Zardari appreciated Iraq's cooperation in facilitating Pakistani pilgrims and acknowledged the valuable contribution of the Pakistani community in Iraq.

The Iraqi president invited President Zardari to visit Iraq. The president accepted the invitation and said that he would undertake the visit soon.

World Bank study finds Pakistan's urbanisation level at 88pc

• Official estimates classify only 39pc of population as urban • Discrepancy arises from reliance on administrative boundaries over population density, settlement patterns

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: An analysis of a World Bank policy research working paper reveals that Pakistan's true level of urbanisation is close to 88 per cent, based on satellite imagery and the Degree of Urbanisation methodology.

According to the working paper titled "When Does a Village Become a Town?: Revisiting Pakistan's Urbanisation Using Satellite Data", the substantial discrepancy arises from Pakistan's reliance on administrative boundaries that fail to reflect actual population density or settlement patterns.

The analysis finds that Pakistan's urban population is nearly twice the size reported in official statistics, as the administrative definition accounts only for the largest cities. Based on the DoU classification, 88pc of the population lives in an area with urban characteristics – 46pc in high-density cities and about 42pc in moderately dense urban centres.

These figures contrast sharply with the 39pc urban population reported in official data, revealing a major gap between politically defined and technically measured classifications.

The findings indicate that secondary cities and peri-urban areas — rather than megacities — are the primary drivers of recent urban expansion and are systematically overlooked in official classifications. This discrepancy between functional and administrative classifications has significant fiscal and planning implications.

Misclassified areas reduce property tax revenues and undermine the planning and delivery of essential public services. Moreover, misclassification distorts spatial socio-economic indicators, masking the true extent of urban-rural disparities and complicating the design of effective, evidence-based public policy, according to the research paper produced by the World Bank's Office of the Poverty and Equity Global Department.

The last time Pakistan's official classification of urban areas reflected on-the-ground realities was in 1972. Before then, urban classification was based on objective indicators such as population count, infrastructure, and public service provision. However, after 1972, the responsibility shifted to provincial and municipal committees, which have no formal obligation to consider population concentration or objective metrics when defining urban areas – nor are they required to periodically revise urban boundaries.

The study shows that while official statistics suggest 39pc of Pakistan's population is urban, this figure rises to 88pc when population density and concentration are considered. The official definition captures only the largest urban centres and fails to recognise the urban character of growing peri-urban areas that now host nearly half the population.

Additionally, the paper discussed how mirroring the urban expansion of Pakistan with the development of "megacities" overlooks the significant urbanisation occurring in growing peri-urban areas. While the expansion of cities like Lahore and Karachi is a notable indicator of the country's increasing urbanisation, a large part of the urban population growth occurs in many intermediate and small urban centres.

The study uses the Degree of Urbanisation method, which relies on satellite data to assess population density, providing a more accurate and globally comparable view of urbanisation beyond administrative boundaries.

Across all provinces, the divergence between the official urban classification and the DoU persists, with official statistics consistently

Official data underrepresents urbanisation, with Islamabad showing only 47pc urban population compared to 90pc under the DoU, while figures in Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh are more closely aligned.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the DoU estimates the urban population at nearly three times the official 15pc, while Islamabad is mostly dense urban, and other provinces show mixed suburban and peri-urban growth. The report concludes that Pakistan's urban landscape has transformed dramatically over the past two decades. Since the early 2000s, a growing share of the rural population has shifted away from agriculture, transforming previously rural settlements into new and vibrant urban centres.

Ready to face all threats in the region, says deputy naval chief

Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz pins hopes on Gwadar port

By Shazia Hasan

KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy is always prepared and ready against all threats in the region, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz said on Tuesday .

"We are always keeping an eye on whatever is happening around us. We are always monitoring what is happening. This is an ongoing thing, our monitoring and our readiness," he told the media on the second day of the Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference 2025 (PIMEC-25) at the Expo Centre.

He said that Pakistan would soon induct new submarines into its fleet, which will significantly contribute to national and maritime security.

"Pakistan Navy's role in the region is to ensure maritime security and the free flow of trade in the region. The new submarines will significantly contribute to that in the coming days," he said.

Talking about PIMEC, he termed it an effort to provide stimulus to Pakistan's maritime sector and blue economy.

The vice admiral said that there were some maritime industries that were "less visible and less known".

He also stressed the need for efficient port operations and hoped to see Gwadar Port fully functional soon.

"Your turnaround port time, and the size of ships that can dock there, matters, like our deep water terminal in Karachi where we can dock big ships. Gwadar is at such a strategic location that it will help significantly in transshipment and seaborne trade. A fully functional Gwadar Port will present us with huge economic opportunities in the future," he said.

The Karachi Shipyard also has a huge presence at PIMEC-25. While speaking about it, the Vice Admiral reminded that it was built ages ago and, therefore, has a limit to the kind of ships being built there.

"The world has moved on. Shipyards in the world today are huge. We are also trying to build a shipyard on those lines in Gwadar. We hope to progress there. There was also a discussion about building a shipyard in Port Qasim. So yes, I think we need to have more shipyards. And the sooner the better," he said.

Easterly winds 'bringing polluted air from India'

Dawn Report

LAHORE: The smog situation in cities across central Punjab improved drastically over the course of Tuesday, with the provincial metropolis' Air Quality Index (AQI) dropping from a 'hazardous' 439 to 182 by midnight.

Easterly winds bringing pollution from across the eastern border blanketed many cities with dense smog throughout the day, but as windspeeds picked up and rain clouds began to gather, AQI levels also improved in the evening.

According to the Smog Monitoring and Forecasting System, winds blowing from the east and southeast carried polluted particles from the regions of Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, and Hoshiarpur of Indian Punjab, into central Punjab.

Wind speeds between six and eight miles per hour carried polluted air from the east into Lahore, Kasur, Faisalabad, Okara, and Sahiwal.

Due to falling temperatures and the absence of rainfall, pollutants are accumulating near the ground, resulting in sharp rise in PM2.5 concentration in the air.

However, the average AQI in Lahore on Tuesday was around 212, the *Associated Press of Pakistan* reported.

Some of the most polluted areas in the city included DHA Phase 8 (532), Paragon Society (429), GCU Hiking & Mountaineering Club (352), Barki (310), Askari 10 (286), and Ravi Road (281).

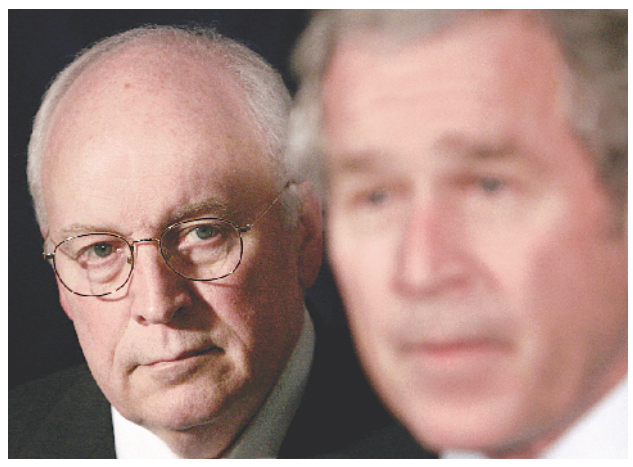
Experts warn that the intensity of pollution is expected to persist throughout the night as temperature inversion keeps the pollutants trapped near the surface.

However, officials monitoring the phenomenon in Punjab said winds were blowing from the south to northwest at a speed of 11 km/h, helping disperse pollutants and gradually improve Lahore's air quality, *APP* said.

Rain is also expected within the next 24 hours, according to a Pakistan Meteorological Department forecast.

Dick Cheney, powerful former US vice president, dies at 84

Republican served 'father & son' Bush administrations; came under fire over ties to Halliburton



DICK Cheney was George W. Bush's vice president, and a key figure behind the 2003 invasion of Iraq.—Reuters/file

WASHINGTON: Dick Cheney, a driving force behind the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and considered by presidential historians as one of the most powerful vice presidents in US history, died at age 84 from complications of pneumonia and cardiac and vascular disease, his family said on Tuesday.

The Republican — a former Wyoming congressman and secretary of defence — was already a major Washington player when then-Texas governor George W. Bush chose him to be his running mate in the 2000 presidential race that Bush went on to win.

As vice president from 2001 to 2009, Cheney fought vigorously for an expansion of the power of the presidency, having felt that it had been eroding since the Watergate scandal that drove his one-time boss Richard Nixon from office. He also expanded the clout of the vice president's office by putting together a national security team that often served as a power center of its own within the administration.

Cheney was a strong advocate for the 2003 invasion of Iraq and was among the most outspoken of Bush administration officials warning of the danger from Iraq's alleged stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. No such weapons were found.

He clashed with several top Bush aides, including secretaries of state Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, and defended "enhanced" interrogation techniques of terrorism suspects that included waterboarding and sleep deprivation. Others, including the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the UN special rapporteur on counterterrorism and human rights, called these techniques "torture".

Cheney was troubled much of his life by heart problems, suffering the first of a number of heart attacks at age 37. He had a heart transplant in 2012.

Taking on Iraq

Cheney and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who had been colleagues in the Nixon White House, were key voices pushing for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In the run-up to the war, Cheney suggested there might be links between Iraq and al Qaeda and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. A commission on the 9/11 attacks later discredited this theory.

Cheney predicted US forces would be "greeted as liberators" in Iraq and that the troop deployment — which would last around a decade — would "go relatively quickly ... weeks rather than months."

Although no weapons of mass destruction were found, Cheney in later years insisted that the invasion was the right decision based on the intelligence at the time and the removal of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from power.

More than a decade earlier, as defence secretary under President George H.W. Bush, Cheney had directed the US military operation to expel an Iraqi occupation army from Kuwait in the first Gulf War.

He urged Bush senior to take an uncompromising line against Iraq after Saddam Hussein sent his troops to occupy Kuwait in August 1990. But at that point Cheney did not support an invasion of Iraq, saying the United States would have to act alone and that the situation would become a quagmire.

Because of Cheney's long ties to the Bush family and experience in government, George W. Bush chose him to head his vice presidential search in 2000. Bush then decided the man doing the search was the best candidate for the job.

Upon his re-entry into politics, Cheney received a $35 million retirement package from oil services firm Halliburton, which he had run from 1995 to 2000.

Halliburton became a leading government contractor during the Iraq war. Cheney's oil industry links were a subject of frequent criticism by opponents of the war.

Richard Bruce Cheney was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, to Marjorie Lorraine (ne Dickey) and Richard Herbert Cheney on January 30, 1941, the day then-President Franklin Roosevelt turned 59. His father was a federal worker with the Soil Conservation Service.—Reuters

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